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SUBJECT: TURKEY TO PRESS SYRIA TO RESPECT UNSCR 1701

REF: STATE 136196

Classified By: Political-Military Counselor Carl Siebentritt for reasons 1.4(b,d).

¶1. (C) We met with MFA Middle East Department Head Sedat Onal on August 21 to encourage Turkey to emphasize the unambiguous requirement to abide by the arms embargo against Hizballah and UNSCR 1701 and the importance of playing a constructive role in Lebanon's future (reftel) in upcoming meetings with Iranian and Syrian officials. Onal stated that the USG and the GOT share the same goal of supporting and implementing UNSCR 1701; this was the agenda for Foreign Minister Gul's visit to Lebanon (on August 16) and Israel (on August 20).

¶2. (C) FM Gul is scheduled to visit Syrian President Asad and FM Al-Moualem in Damascus on August 22. According to Onal, Turkey will press Syria to fully support UNSCR 1701, including respect for the arms embargo. Onal added that this is consistent with the GOT's previous message to Syria but acknowledged that there has been no positive change in Syria's rhetoric to date. Turkey will continue to press the Syrian government, because Syria's position on Lebanon will be a determining factor in Turkey's decision to participate in an expanded UNIFIL. Onal suggested that the Foreign Minister may also travel to Iran very soon to send the same message.

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